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EU Fisheries Policy

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Report Highlights:

One of the main objectives of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy is to prevent fish stocks from being overexploited. Key conservation measures include the adoption of annual Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and multi-annual conservation plans. Bilateral fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries ensure a substantial additional supply to the EU industry. Due to diminishing resources, the EU's processing industry heavily depends on imports of fresh products and raw materials from third countries. For certain fishery products, the EU has suspended the import duties or reduced duties within tariff quotas.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the main objectives of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy is to prevent fish stocks from being overexploited. Key conservation measures include the adoption of annual Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and multi-annual conservation plans. Bilateral fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries ensure a substantial additional supply to the EU industry.

Illegal fishing poses a serious threat to the sustainability of fisheries. The European Commission has tabled a draft regulation which, if adopted, requires all fishery products to be certified as having been caught legally.

The European Fisheries Fund (EFF) covers a 7-year period (2007-2013) with a total budget of EUR 3.8 billion. Funding is available to all the different fishery sectors, including the EU aquaculture industry which faces a number of scientific and technological challenges.

Due to diminishing resources, the EU's processing industry heavily depends on imports of fresh products and raw materials from third countries. For certain fishery products, the EU has suspended the import duties or reduced duties within tariff quotas.

This report complements the EU Fishery Marketing Report (GAIN Report E48031) written by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in The Hague, the Netherlands. This report can be downloaded from <http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp>.

COMMON FISHERIES POLICY (CFP)

The objective of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is "to ensure the sustainable development of fishing activities from an environmental, economic and social point of view". To prevent fish stocks from being overexploited, the EU has adopted the following conservation measures:

- Total Allowable Catches (TACs) limiting the amount of a specific species that can be caught over a given period of time
- Technical measures (mesh sizes, closed areas, minimum landing sizes, by-catch limits)
- Limiting the number of fishing days at sea

To preserve fish stocks, the EU has established two types of multi-annual conservation plans: recovery plans to help rebuild stocks that are in danger of collapse and management plans to maintain stocks at safe biological levels. Recovery plans contain formulas for calculating annual TACs and quotas based on scientific stock estimates.

TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES (TACs)

The EU's main resource management measure is setting TACs for about 150 fish species and dividing them between the different Member States in the form of quotas. TACs are adopted annually by the Council on the basis of Commission proposals. The Commission's proposals are based on scientific opinions delivered by the International Council for the Exploitation of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF).

Each year, threatened species such as cod, sole, hake, lobster, anchovy, etc. are the focus of Member States negotiations. For 2008, despite strong opposition from environmental groups, the Council agreed to an 11 percent increase of the TAC for cod in the North Sea accompanied by a reduction of 10 percent of days-at-sea. For Eastern Baltic cod, the TAC

has been cut by 5 percent plus a 20 percent cut in days-at-sea. The TAC for Western Baltic cod has been cut by 28 percent plus a 10 percent cut in days-at-sea. In other areas, the quota cuts for cod are less severe than proposed by the Commission (18 percent instead of 25 percent).

TACs for southern hake and Norway lobster in Iberian waters have been cut by 5 percent plus a reduction of 10 percent in fishing effort. The TAC for North Sea sole has been cut by 15 percent and by 8 percent for sole in the Bay of Biscay. By-catches of herring and blue whiting in the North Sea have been cut by 41 percent and 37 percent respectively. The Council also adopted the controversial proposal to keep the fishery of anchovy in the Bay of Biscay closed until spring 2008, when stocks will be re-examined.

[Council Regulation 40/2008](#) lists the TACs for 2008 (published in Official Journal L 19 of January 23, 2008).

In December 2007, the European Court of Auditors published a report in which it audits the implementation of the CFP by the Member States, and more specifically, the effectiveness of the TACs (published in [Official Journal C 317 of December 28, 2007](#)). The Court concludes that catch data are incomplete and that the real level of catches is unknown. As a consequence, the TAC and quota systems cannot be applied properly. The report also concludes that inspection systems do not provide assurance that infringements are effectively prevented and detected. The procedures for dealing with reported infringements are ineffective and the Court recommends the establishment of adequate inspection and sanction systems. In response to the Court of Auditors' report, the Commission said that they will table a new regulation on fisheries controls in the second half of 2008.

RECOVERY PLANS

The following plans have been adopted/proposed:

- Multi-annual plan for the sustainable exploitation of the stock of sole in the Western Channel (Council Regulation 509/2007)
- Multi-annual plan for the cod stocks in the Baltic Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks (proposal)
- Multi-annual plan for fisheries exploiting stocks of plaice and sole in the North Sea (Council Regulation 676/2007)
- Recovery plan for blue-fin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean (Council Regulation 1559/2007)
- Recovery plan for Northern hake (Council Regulation 811/2004)
- Recovery plan for Southern hake and Norway lobster in the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian peninsula (Council Regulation 2116/2005)
- Recovery plan for Greenland halibut in the framework of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (Council Regulation 2115/2005)
- Management plan for plaice and sole in the North Sea (proposal)

ILLEGAL FISHING

Illegal fishing disregards conservation measures and poses a serious threat to the sustainability of fisheries. As it is a highly profitable activity, operators have developed a number of techniques to conceal the illegal origin of their catches. In October 2007, the Commission tabled a [proposal establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing](#). If adopted, all fishery products (including processed products) will have to be certified by the flag state as having been caught legally. Fishery products lacking such certification will be rejected.

AQUACULTURE

Aquaculture is a fast growing sector in the world food production industry. According to the FAO, aquaculture is the only way to meet the increased demand for fishery products. Worldwide aquaculture production would have to double by 2030, representing an increase of 37 million tones of fish per year, in order to maintain current fish consumption levels.

In the EU, aquaculture production consists of three main activities: sea fish farming, marine shellfish farming, and fresh water fish farming. In 2005, the EU-27 aquaculture production amounted to 1,272,455 metric tons, representing only 2% of the world production. Five Member States accounted for 73% of the EU-27 production in 2005: France (20%), Spain (17%), Italy (14%), U.K. (14%) and Greece (8%). The EU aquaculture sector faces a number of challenges which include limitation of space and water of good quality, technical problems, risk from diseases and environmental issues. For some of the farmed species, the market has become saturated which results in lower prices and lower profits for aquaculture producers.

While aquaculture production is rising in other parts of the world (mainly Asia and South-America), EU aquaculture production is stagnating. To increase the sector's competitiveness, the EU provides financial aid under the European Fisheries Fund to support innovative and environmentally friendly aquaculture projects. The EU is also funding research programs to tackle scientific and technological challenges faced by the aquaculture industry. One of the funded projects is "Consensus", a 3-year project that will identify the need for further research, biotechnologies and other innovative technologies, considering legislation affecting aquaculture, and economic constraints. A revised EU strategy for aquaculture is expected by the end of 2008.

EUROPEAN FISHERIES FUND (EFF)

Council Regulation 1198/2006 establishes a new financial support scheme for the EU fisheries sector. The EFF covers a seven year period, from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2013, with a total budget of around EUR 3.8 billion. Funding is available to all the different sectors of the industry: sea and inland fisheries, aquaculture, producer organizations and the processing and marketing sectors. The EU's less developed areas, the so-called convergence areas, have been allocated the biggest shares of the EFF. It is up to the Member States to decide how they allocate EFF aid between the different priorities. Member States have set up operational programs (OP) for the entire period 2007-2013 in which they describe and justify their priorities. The OPs were adopted by the Commission and checked for consistency with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy.

EFF Priorities are:

- Adaptation of the EU fishing fleet to available sources
- Aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products
- Measures of common interest
- Sustainable development of fisheries areas
- Technical assistance to facilitate the distribution of EFF aid

Member States operational programs are published on the Commission's website at http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/structural_measures/operational_programmes_en.htm

TRADE AGREEMENTS

Bilateral fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries are key elements of the CFP. They ensure a substantial additional supply to the EU industry and provide employment in the fisheries sector. Bilateral agreements allow access of the EU fleet to surplus fish resources in the territorial waters of non-EU countries. Each agreement includes a "protocol" which lays down the specific conditions for its implementation. The type of agreement varies in terms of the partner country. "Reciprocity agreements" are usually concluded with Northern European countries which have the means to fully exploit their own resources. Such agreements take the form of a simple exchange of fishing quotas in their respective waters. With other countries, mainly developing countries but also with Greenland, which do not fully exploit their resources, the EU concludes "partnership agreements". Under such agreements, the EU pays a financial contribution to access the third country's fishing zone.

FISHERIES PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS			
Country	Duration of Protocol	Species	EU financial contribution (euros/per year)
Cape Verde	5 years (until 2012)	Tuna	385 000
Comoros	6 years (until 2010)	Tuna	390 000
Ivory Coast	6 years (until 2013)	Tuna	595 000
Gabon	6 years (until 2011)	Tuna	860 000
Greenland	6 years (until 201)	Cod, redfish, halibut, shrimp, capelin, snowcrab	15 847 244
Guinea	5 years (ends in 2008)	Mixed	1 400 000
Guinea-Bissau	4 years (until 2011)	Mixed	7 000 000
Kiribati	6 years (until 2012)	Tuna	478 400
Madagascar	6 years (until 2012)	Tuna	1 197 000
Mauritania	Ends in July 2008	Mixed	86 000 000
Micronesia	3 years (until 2010)	Tuna	559 000
Morocco	4 years (until 2011)	Mixed	36 100 000
Mozambique	5 years (until 2011)	Tuna	990 000
Sao Tome	4 years (until 2010)	Tuna	663 000
Seychelles	6 years (until 2011)	Tuna	5 355 000
Solomon Islands	3 years (until 2010)	Tuna	400 000
RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS (EXCHANGE OF QUOTAS)			
Faroe Islands	Until 2012	Whitefish Industrial species	-
Iceland	Until 2009	Redfish	-
Norway	Until 2009	Cod, haddock, saithe, whiting, plaice, mackerel, herring	-

Detailed information on the different bilateral fisheries agreements is available on the Commission's website at

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/external_relations/bilateral_agreements_en.htm

IMPORT DUTIES & QUOTAS**TARIFFS**

EU import duties for fish and processed fish products are published in the EU's Tariff Schedule. Tariffs applicable as of January 1, 2008, can be found in Official Journal L 286 of October 31, 2007 and can be accessed through our website at <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/customs.html>. Chapter 3 of the EU Tariff Schedule relates to fresh, chilled and frozen fish; Chapter 16 to processed fish products.

Council Regulation 1255/96, amended by Council Regulation 1527/2007, temporarily suspends the tariff duties on certain industrial, agricultural and fishery products, which cannot adequately be supplied by EU producers. Due to the EU's diminishing resources, the fisheries processing industry heavily depends on imports of fresh products and raw materials from third countries. Council Regulation 1527/2007 suspends import duties on the following products for 2008:

CN Code	Description
0302 69 99 0302 79 98	Sturgeons, fresh, chilled or frozen, for processing
0302 69 99	Lump fish with roe, fresh or chilled, for processing
0302 69 99 0302 79 98	Red Snapper, fresh chilled or frozen, for processing
0302 70 00 0302 80 90	Hard fish roes, fresh, chilled or frozen
0303 11 00 0303 19 00	Pacific salmon, frozen and headless, for the processing industry for manufacture into pastes or spreads
0304 19 39 0304 19 99 0304 29 61 0304 99 99	Fillets and meat of dogfish, fresh, chilled or frozen
0305 20 00	Hard fish roes, salted or in brine
0306 19 90 0306 29 90	Krill for processing
1604 11 00 1604 20 10	Pacific salmon, for the processing industry for manufacture into pastes or spreads
1604 30 90	Hard fish roes, washed, cleaned of adherent organs and simply salted or in brine, for processing
1605 10 00	Crabs of the species "King", "Hansaki", "Kengani", "Queen" and "Snow", "Red", "Rough Stone", "Mud", simply boiled in water and shelled, whether or not frozen, in immediate packings of a net content of 2 kg or more
1605 10 00	Crabs of the species <i>Paralomis granulosa</i>

QUOTAS

To ensure an adequate supply of fishery products to the EU processing industry, the EU suspends or reduces custom duties for certain fishery products within tariff quotas. [Council Regulation 824/2007](#) opens autonomous tariff quotas for certain fishery products for the period 2007 to 2009.

Description	Quota Quantity (MT)	Rate of Duty (%)
Cod, fresh chilled or frozen	80 000	0
Cod salted or in brine	10 000	0
Blue grenadier, frozen fillets	20 000	0
Hake and Pink-cusk eel	15 000	0
Southern blue whiting, frozen fillets	2 000	0
Anchovies, salted or in brine	10 000	0
Herrings	20 000	0
Herrings, spiced and/or vinegar cured	10 000	6
Loins of tunas and skipjack	27 000	6
Rock lobster and other sea crawfish	1 500	6
Shrimps and prawns (<i>Pandalus borealis</i>), cooked and peeled	20 000	6
Tubes of squid, frozen	45 000	0
Squid, frozen	1 500	0
Surimi, frozen	55 000	0
Hake, frozen fillets	15 000	4
Cod, frozen fillets	20 000	0
Sole, frozen fillets	5 000	0

Under the Uruguay Round Agreement, the EU agreed to open tariff quotas for certain commodities. The table below shows the WTO quotas for fish, as published in Annex 7 to the EU's Tariff Schedule:

Description	Quota Quantity (MT)	Rate of Duty (%)
Tunas (for the canning industry)	17 250	0
Herrings	34 000	0
Silver hake	2 000	8
Fish of the genus <i>Coregonus</i>	1 000	5.5
Fish of the genus <i>Allocyttus</i> and of the species <i>Pseudocyttus maculatus</i>	200	0
Cod of the species <i>Gadus morhua</i> and <i>Gadus ogac</i>	25 000	0
Shrimps of the species <i>Pandalus borealis</i> , shelled, boiled, frozen, but not further processed	500	0

IMPORT POLICY

All imports of fishery products into the EU have to be accompanied by sanitary certificates. A complete overview of EU certification requirements for U.S. fishery products is given in NOAA's exporter guide "How to export seafood to the European Union". A copy of the exporter guide can be obtained through our website at <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/seafood2.html> or by contacting:

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GLOSSARY & SOURCES

CFP:	Common Fisheries Policy
DG:	Directorate General
EFF:	European Fisheries Fund
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICES:	International Council for the Exploitation of the Sea
MT:	Metric Tons
NOAA:	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
STECF:	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries
TAC:	Total Allowable Catch
WTO:	World Trade Organization

EU Legislation:

The referenced legislation can be downloaded from the European Commission's website at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

Sources :

- European Commission : DG Fisheries
- Eurostat
- European Court of Auditors
- FAO

Visit our website: our website <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/> provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules and food laws and allows easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information. More information on the EU's fisheries policy can be found at <http://useu.usmission.gov/agri/seafood2.html>. E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@usda.gov

Related reports from USEU Brussels:

Report Number	Title	Date Released
E48031	EU Fishery Marketing Report	March 2008
E47006	EU Policy & Statistics	January 2007
These reports can be accessed through our website http://useu.usmission.gov/agri or through the FAS website http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/attacherep/default.asp .		